

I would like to address the first question at large, however my remarks will be relevant to all six questions, for Alaska and the rest of the Nation.

Our Nation is at risk from those who do not understand that agriculture contributes to our every day life, including the food, fiber and natural resources. Production agriculture is more than cows and plows. Considering the fields of biotechnology, agribusiness, food science, marketing, and even homeland security – Production agriculture is a highly important technical and scientific industry.

The next Farm policy needs to ensure that Agriscience education is restored as a fundamental component of our public school system. Throughout Alaska, there are only a handful of natural resource classes, but only one agricultural education program, which has been in Palmer since the 1940's.

What happened to agricultural education in Delta Junction?, Fairbanks?, North Pole?, and the rest of Alaska? Local boards of education have deemed agricultural education non-essential or too expensive and have eliminated these programs. Along with agriculture they have also eliminated the partner program of Home Economics, which focused on the family values, food preparation, and self reliance.

The current funding source for America's agriculture education is through the Federal Carl D. Perkins Vocational Act. Even with very little actually going toward agriculture, this funding is in jeopardy of being discontinued, if so, the first to disappear will be the local agricultural education program.

It would be in the best interest of American Agriculture to fund local natural resources and agricultural education programs in order to strengthen rural America and provide a foundation to strengthen families, and communities and the U.S. position in global markets.

The American work ethic was founded in the sweat and tears of the pioneers, and we are now faced with a challenge to regain the work ethics, utilizing today's technologies and continue the advancement of the sophisticated, science based production agricultural systems.

Much like the U.S.; Alaska is truly a state wealthy, with opportunities, for inspiring young agriculturalists, however if not given the opportunity for education, training and experience, how can we expect to see anything but less than status quo?

Thank you for consideration

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